THE OSWALD TAPES

BY JEFF COHEN

Either Lee Harvey Oswald was a bona fide pro-Castroite or he was an agent of U.S. intelligence. There is no other alternative. It was Warren Commissioner Gerald Ford who insisted that Oswald's "commitment to communism" be listed as motivation for murder.

But the sum total of Oswald's Fair Play for Cuba activities consisted of three leaflet-distributions and two radio interviews. Scrutiny of these events, which were all staged in New Orleans, sheds light on the leftist/agent issue.

The Warren Commision found that Oswald, who issued a membership card to himself, had acted as secretary of a nonexistent "New Orleans chapter".

> *His "organization" was a product of his imagination. The chapter had never been chartered by the national FPCC organization. It appears to have been a solitary operation on Oswald's part . . .*

Some of Oswald's "Hands Off Cuba" leaflets were stamped with the address "FPCC 544 Camp St. NEW ORLEANS, LA." If the Commission seriously pursued this lead, it would have found no Fair Play for Cuba office, but instead, the detective agency of Guy Banister, the right-wing, ex-head of the Chicago FBI office.

We now know that the Fair Play for Cuba Committee was targeted by the FBI [illegible] Harry Dean [illegible] became an officer of the Chicago FBI, declared: "I got the impression that Oswald was doing the same thing I was."

While leafleting near Canal Street on Aug. 9, 1963, Oswald was confronted by three Cuban exiles and was assaulted by one—Carlos Bringuier. Oswald, who had folded his arms in a non-violent gesture, was arrested for disturbing the peace. Bail-out of a lawyer, Oswald requested an interview with an FBI agent.

One week later, accompanied by two day-laborer [illegible] he had hired, Oswald distributed leaflets outside the International Trade Mart. Because WDSU-TV cameras happened to film the event, Oswald gained instant notoriety in the pro-exile, anti-Castro milieu of New Orleans. Bill Stuckey of WDSU radio invited the parties [illegible] interviews on the [illegible] *several months now.*

When asked about his personal background, he skipped over his two and a half years in Russia. This omission became the main issue of the radio debate on August 21—three days later.

The Great Debate put Lee Harvey Oswald up against Carlos Bringuier, the Cuban exile who had staged the public confrontation with Oswald ten days earlier; Ed Butler, anti-communist propagandist with the Information Council of the Americas (INCA); and the two moderators from WDSU-News, Bill Stuckey and Bill Slatter.

Stuckey and Butler opened the debate by producing newspaper clippings that exposed Oswald's 1959 attempt to renounce his American citizenship and become a Soviet citizen. Lee Oswald prevaricated when he denied those attempts. [illegible]

> *[illegible] living in Russia? I was, of course with the knowledge of the American Embassy, getting this permission [to reside]*
>
> *at no time was I out of contact with the American Embassy.*

But the most revealing response was evoked when the smooth-talking Oswald was momentarily stumped. He stammered badly, and made a dramatic slip-up.

> **SLATTER:** *I'm curious to know just how you supported yourself during the three years that you lived in the Soviet Union. Did you have a government subsidy?*
>
> **OSWALD:** *Well, as I uh, well, I will answer that ques . . . uh question direct then, since you will not rest until I get your answer. I worked in Russia. I was under uh, the protection of the uh . . . of the uh . . . that is to say, I was not under the protection of the uh . . . American government. I mean that is I was at all times considered an American citizen.*

The Warren Commission published transcript of this debate as Stuck Exhibit No. 3. The crucial exce follows:

> **OSWALD:** . . . *I worked in Russia was* ***not under the protection of the*** *that is to say I was not under protecti of the American government . . .*
>
> (emphasis add

Although the Commission's 99% a curate transcript contains typing erro the above "mistake" is the only c that materially alters the meaning of statement. By adding the word "not," revealing slip-up becomes a mere repe tious stammer.

This writer is indebted to the myo right-wing groups who made lp recor of the debate. INCA's Ed Butler produc the debate on record with a flashy r album jacket: *OSWALD—Self-Portr a Red.* The [illegible] Christi [illegible] also produced one, "with dynamic commentary by Dr. (Billy Jam Hargis."

Was Lee Oswald an agent? T evidence suggests that he was; that l actions were taken to establish 'left-cove

What about his apparent sincerity defending Fair Play for Cuba? Oswa was full of contradictions. At the sar time he criticized "Russian imperialism on the radio, he wrote to the Co munist Party for political guidance. C wald simultaneously attempted to jo groups in the opposing Trotskyist a Stalinist camps. The evidence indicat that Mr. Oswald succumbed to one of t known occupational hazards of the i formant's trade—schizophrenia.

> **BRINGUIER:** *Do you agree with Fid Castro when in his last speech of Ju [illegible] of this year he qualified President John F. Kennedy of the United Stat as a traitor and a thief. Do you agr with Mr. Castro?*
>
> OSWALD: *I [illegible] agree with th [illegible]*

Tonight we have with us a representative [illegible] probably the most controversi organization connected with Cuba [illegible] the country. The organization, th Fair Play for Cuba Committee, th national Lee Oswald, secretary of th New Orleans chapter to the Fair Pla [illegible] Committee. This organizatic